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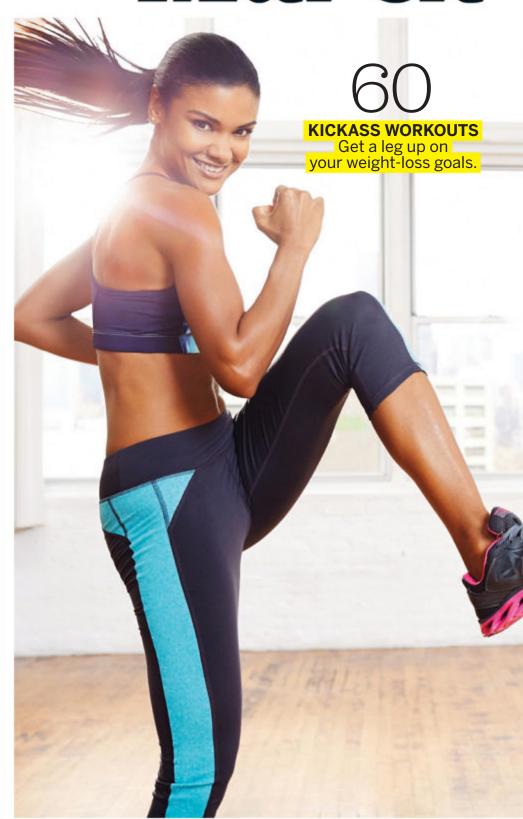
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Throw together this delish dinner tonight.

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ON OUR COVER Sierra Andersen/ Wilhelmina Fitness. Photographed by Jeff Olson. Hair: Stephen Hoeppner/ABTP using L'Oréal Paris. Makeup: Carrie LaMarca/ABTP using Make Up For Ever. Shot on location at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. Tommy Hilfiger bikini. Shashi bracelets. Freestyle watch.

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Advice, Please!

Torch Calories • While You Cook

"I realized that cooking is a calorie-burning activity when I started wearing a Fitbit," celebrity chef Rocco DiSpirito says. That inspired his new book, Cook Your Butt Off!, which is filled with healthy meals that you'll burn more calories preparing than you'll consume eating. "It's not as if these recipes are difficult to make and you're going to be tired—like you just did a Spinning class," DiSpirito says. Still, the extra activity adds up. While moving around the kitchen as he chopped and sautéd veggies for a vegetable lasagna dish, for example, he torched 228 calories. "Instead of flipping on a food processor, use a grater and lots of hand chopping," he advises. And volunteer for postdinner cleanup. You'll burn about 90 calories clearing and washing the dishes.

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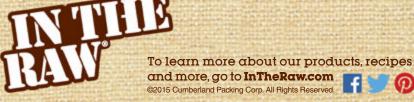
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Take a Stand



Does this chair make my **butt look big?** I've been pondering that since reading this month's special health report, "In the Hot Seat," on page 74, which made me realize that even though I'm a frequent exerciser, any treadmill run or Spinning class that I manage to fit into my day—and typically feel pretty smug about—is no match for what my office chair is doing to my body. Experts blame sitting, something that most American workers do 12 to 15 hours a day, for escalating our risk for obesity, certain cancers, diabetes, heart disease and early death. It also hurts our metabolism, mobility, and muscle strength.

So I'm vowing to get up from my desk more frequently (at least 10 minutes every hour) to stretch my legs. Yes, FITNESS staffers, that's me wandering past your office—again. Switching to a smaller water bottle, which I have to take to the kitchen to refill more often, is another trick. And if papers land on my desk to read, I'll try to process them while standing, which research suggests fosters more creative and collaborative thinking. I hope you'll join this uprising to boost your mind and booty!

Betty S. Wong, Editor in Chief betty@fitnessmagazine.com

Betty Gets <mark>Sweaty</mark>

How I'm working out this month AIRbarre by AntiGravity class at New York City's Crunch Gym.

Why I love it Instead of relying on a stationary ballet barre for support, you use a silk hammock for jumps, pliés, inversions, and more toning and lengthening dance moves. Getting into pretty acrobatic poses takes some body awareness-wait, you want my leg to cross over where?—but isn't as daunting as you would imagine. The best part: ending class with relaxation breaths while wrapped up head to toe in your gently swaying silk cocoon.

Try it Go to antigravityfitness.com or crunch.com to find a class near you.



The FITNESS team and I hanging out in our silk



LO-CAL

PREP TIME: 10 MINS | MAKES 8 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 2 liters plain seltzer water
- 1 tablespoon fresh pressed ginger juice
- 1 fresh squeezed lemon (medium-sized)
- l teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 5 packets Stevia In The Raw

PREPARATION

Cut small pieces of peeled ginger root and place in a press (a garlic press works great). Press ginger root to produce I tablespoon of juice and place in small bowl. Add strained lemon juice, vanilla extract and Stevia In The Raw[®]. Stir to combine. Open 2-liter bottle of seltzer and pour out 1/2 cup to make room for soda flavor mixture. Using a funnel, carefully pour mixture into seltzer bottle and screw closed. (The ingredients may react with the carbonation causing extra bubbles.) Open cap slowly and let the extra gas escape before pouring. Serve over ice and enjoy!



To learn more about our products, recipes and more, go to InTheRaw.com

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Do Share! <



Letters

A Real Role Model

I was over-the-moon excited to read about Demi Lovato ["Stronger Than Ever," January 2015]. You did something so important by choosing a woman who got real with her struggle with eating issues. All women grapple with body image, and this is a topic that should be talked about often so we can support one another. Reading about her vulnerability and honesty was so very helpful.

-Kelly Kurcina, Haymarket, Virginia

Health Check

I want to thank you for "On the Road to Diabetes?" [January]. It's eye-opening to know that prediabetes can be a problem even before there are symptoms. I have a family history of the disease, and I'm going to get my numbers checked now.

> -Emily Gotowka, Bay City, Michigan

Style Secrets

"Tricks of the Braid" [January] was fantastic. For years I've failed to braid my hair like that. The step-bystep instructions and photos were really easy to follow. I did the braid successfully on myself and my little cousin, and it looked so cute! I'll be styling it like this for work.

—Trinity Torres, Suffolk, Virginia

Superfoods

Motivation Moment

"Fit is not a 🏻

Turnips, parsnip, carrots, and beets-why not? I took your advice in "Dig In" [January] and roasted a mix of these root vegetables. used them in a stir-fry and enjoyed some in a salad. Keep the innovative and healthy ideas coming.

-Lee Teevan, Norfolk, Virginia

You all loved our January 2015 cover girl, @ddlovato, and find her just as inspiring as we do! Here's how you sounded off on social.

Good for you, Demi-I love your attitude. Accepting yourself brings you all the happiness in the world, and that is priceless!

-Ruby Ulloa

So excited to see Demi on the cover! She's really become such an inspiration.

-@lkhattendorf

Love @ddlovato's story. Sharing with my 14-year-old, who could benefit from her advice. #strongandhealthy

-@Michele_4MSU

Demi is great. Looks like an average woman like the rest of us, and gives young girls a realistic body image rather than some ridiculous celebrity bod ideal. And she ean saaaana!

-Jennifer Shyn

Score This Freebie!

LOVE AN ARTICLE IN THIS ISSUE-OR DON'T? Send us your raves or rants, and if we publish your letter, we'll send you a Thermoball **Hoodie by The North Face** (a \$220 value), the perfect warm, windproof jacket for all your outdoor fit-ivities. Write to fitnessmail@ fitnessmagazine.com by March 6 and include your name and address.



(@kimmayco) motto when it comes to squeezing in a workout. Whether it's pounding pavement for a few miles or working her core on the playground, "thinking of ways to use my surroundings is all part of the fun," she says. "Come rain or shine, I'll always find a way to get out there." How's that for no excuses? Tag us in your #motivationmoment photos and you could end up on this page.

Start Sharing







Tell us what you like about this issue and how you're working it into your life. Tag us in your posts @Fitness Magazine and you could be featured here!

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"I LOST 130 POUNDS"

MARTINE LOWENTHAL LADD, 30, Shrewsbury, New Jersey



Martine used to weigh 260 pounds. **BOREDOM BUSTER**

"Dancing is my favorite way to exercise. Sometimes Zumba is so fun that it feels as if I'm at a club."

SMART SNACK with peanut butter and raisins] satisfies

"Ants on a log [celery sweet, salty and crunchy cravings."

her unhealthy lifestyle. "If I walked on the treadmill at the gym, I gave myself permission to refuel with pizza," says the waitress, who has worked in restaurants since she was a teen. "And if there was anything green on my plate, even a leaf of wilted lettuce on a burger, I considered the meal healthy." But her poor choices—like fries from the restaurant's kitchen whenever she wanted a snack—caught up with her, and eventually 5-foot-7-inch Martine weighed 260 pounds.

For years, Martine was in denial about

▶Turning Point

Martine was horrified when she saw photos from her cousin's wedding, in August 2009. She couldn't believe how heavy she looked in the green bridesmaid dress.

⊳Smart Steps

Martine had no idea how many calories she was eating, so she started tracking her meals with the MyFitnessPal app. "It completely changed my food choices," she says. "One little mozzarella stick has 100 calories? Not worth it!" She soon discovered that she could eat healthy foods that satisfied her if she dined at home. Breakfast became oatmeal with peanut butter; lunch was often grilled chicken with roasted veggies.

Martine committed to hitting the gym five times a week, experimenting with different classes, like Zumba. yoga and indoor cycling. "At first, I was intimidated to walk into a room full of fit women," Martine remembers. "But they were surprisingly welcoming. I discovered that exercise can be fun, especially when you have supportive friends counting on you to show up."

>Sweet Success

In June 2014, Martine reached 130 pounds. Now nothing can hold her back. "I'm constantly setting new goals to inspire me to stick with my workouts," she says. "I celebrated my last birthday with trapeze lessons!"

VACAY MOTIVATION "I got married last September, On my Caribbean honeymoon, I felt so confident in my bikini."

STRESS FIGHTER "Kickboxing is the best! There's nothing like pounding the heavy bag for a few minutes.'



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"YOGA **STRENGTHENED** OUR BOND"

SABRINA ALICEA, 25, and LYDIA ALICEA, 44, Chicago



Lydia first stepped onto a yoga mat in 2004, seeking an escape from her stressful nursing job. The busy mom of two was hooked from the first sun salutation. "That class helped me relax in a way that I never had before," she remembers. Then and there, Lydia signed up for several

classes a week in the mornings before work.

Sharing the Love

Lydia adored her newfound hobby, and she knew that her then 18-year-old daughter could also benefit from the mindfulness practice. "I wish that I had taken up yoga

Find your perfect practice with our guide to the five most popular kinds of yoga at fitnessmagazine.com /yogastyles.

earlier in my life," Lydia says. "That's why it was important for me to introduce Sabrina to it." To her dismay, her daughter-a high school student who was busy with lacrosse and cheerleadingwasn't so keen on the idea of joining her mom at the studio. "Yoga just didn't seem like a real workout to me," Sabrina recalls. But after two years of her mother trying to convince her, she gave in. "When I finally accepted my mom's invitation, I was pleasantly surprised," Sabrina says. "I liked the class, and it was way more challenging than I had expected."

The pair took weekly classes together for a while, but Sabrina's practice waned during college. A few years later, as she settled into her job as a teacher at an innercity school, she remembered how rejuvenated she had felt after practicing yoga, and she started attending classes at a nearby studio. "For the hour of the day that I'm on the mat, all of my worries about grading papers and keeping students out of trouble disappear," Sabrina says.

DOM School

These days, Sabrina and Lydia each take about four classes a week; despite their hectic schedules, they try to attend one together. And Sabrina just finished training to become a yoga instructor. "This new adventure combines my two passions: teaching and voga," she savs.

At school, Sabrina helps her third and fourth graders relax on exam days by leading them through a few yoga-inspired stretches. Her students love it; one of them even asked for a yoga mat for Christmas. "I'm just so grateful that my mom turned me on to yoga," Sabrina says. "It's a great way to spend time together, and it has enriched both of our lives."



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I Did It!

"Losing a Leg Didn't Slow Me Down"

ALLI MORGAN, 23, Troy, New York

It's been two years since Alli finished a 120-mile triathlon in Florida. She hiked, biked and kayaked from Key Largo to Key West with Project Athena, a nonprofit that helps women realize active goals after health setbacks. This feat reminded Alli—who had her right leg amputated above the knee in August 2011 after a series of severe infections, complications and ineffective surgeries to repair a torn ACL—that she doesn't need two legs to kick ass.



TRAINING PLAN

"I had to relearn how to walk with my prosthetic leg. I slowly worked up to biking, then jogging. I also did strength training and yoga a few times a week."

MY NEXT ADVENTURE

"The tri showed
me that I'm not just
an amputee. Now
I push myself with
para-bobsled and
para-skeleton and hope
to compete in future
Paralympic Games."



"Exercise Got Me Through My Husband's Deployment"

MALLORY DIEHL, 30, Magnolia, Delaware

Mallory and her husband are sole mates: They *love* running together. So Mallory, a teacher, turned to their shared pastime to help her stay positive during Chad's six-month deployment with the U.S. Air Force. She vowed to log 50 miles and complete at least one race each month that her hubby was away. Last June, the twosome kicked off Mallory's endeavor with a Tough Mudder before Chad flew to Asia; they plan on celebrating their reunion with a half-marathon.

SPEED SECRET

"When I get tired during a race, I just think of plowing through those miles to get Chad home faster. It works—I was the first female finisher at a recent 10K!"

POSTRACE REWARD

"A smoothie with frozen banana, almond milk, peanut butter and cinnamon tastes amazing and helps me refuel."

PLAYLIST PICK

"'Brave' by Sara Bareilles keeps me going during long runs."



Have you lost major pounds? Conquered a fear? Tried a new activity? Whatever your accomplishment, we want to hear all about it. Here, two easy ways to get in touch (include before and after photos when applicable).



INSTAGRAM Post shots of yourself in action. Use the hashtag #ididit and tag @fitnessmagazine.com.



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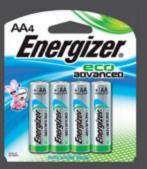
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Buy *Energizer*_® EcoAdvanced_™ AA batteries, mail or email your receipt, and receive a \$5 rewards card valid at retailers nationwide. *See details below.*

Whether running your first marathon or amplifying your current exercise routine, *Energizer* EcoAdvanced has the tips you need to help you go the distance.

1 SET IT, THEN GET IT

Write down your goal then map out your weekly strategy to achieve it.

2 THINK POSITIVELY

During tough workouts, visualize yourself crossing the finish line–after all, seeing is believing.

3 KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Log your "day 1" metrics (pace, weight, waistline, etc.) so you can track your progress and get inspired by your success.

4 FUEL UP

You can't run on any empty tank, so to speak. Fuel your workouts with light meals packed with complex and simple carbs.

5 START SLOW, THEN GO

Don't feel like working out one day? Start walking and you'll eventually end up speeding through the remainder of your route.

6 GET APPY

Shop around for innovative apps that store your workout stats and sync up with motivating playlists.

7 DRESS FOR SUCCESS

When you look good, you feel good, and when you feel good you always perform better.

8 DON'T FORGET TO RE-ENERGIZE

Schedule at least two days of rest per week to relax and recharge your muscles and mind.

9 GROUP TOGETHER

Peer pressure can work positively too. You're less likely to miss a workout when you commit to doing it together with friends.

10 BET YOU CAN

There's nothing like a friendly bet on the line to keep your eye on the prize.

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

The gym can get a little ho-hum. Discover the outdoors and a whole new way to enjoy your workouts.

12 INNOVATE YOUR ROUTINE

Consider swimming laps or taking group yoga or dance classes to keep things interesting and engage muscles you don't normally use.

that's positivenergy

* Fitness Magazine Gift-With-Purchase Rules. Receive one \$5 gift reward when you purchase Energizer® EcAdvanced... AA batteries between 2/3/15 and 4/28/15. Two ways to redeem. 1) Send in your original receipt to: Fitness Magazine, c/o Energizer® GWP, 805 Third Avenue, 29th Floor, New York, NY 10022. Include your name, address and phone number. Send phon

THE NEWEST THING IN BATTERIES ISN'T 100% NEW.

Introducing Energizer_® EcoAdvanced[™]

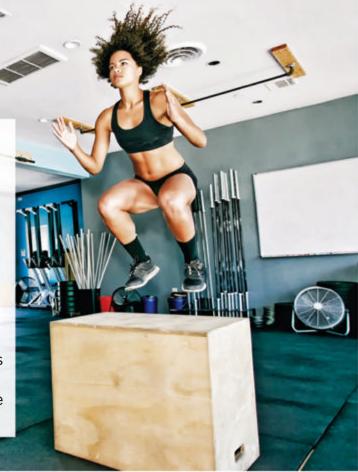




By Bethany Gumper

Will CrossFit make me bulky?

A Strong and sculpted? Yes. Built like a bodybuilder? No. CrossFit combines movements like lifting, sprinting, jumping, rowing and rope climbing for aerobic and anaerobic training. "The Olympicstyle weight lifting—heavy squats, shoulder presses, jerks, snatches and cleans—is what can increase muscle size," says Franci Cohen, a personal trainer and exercise physiologist in Brooklyn. But unless you're lifting for hours a day and subsisting on protein shakes, you're not going to get huge.



• What's up with all the baked veggie snacks?

A These crispy pea-shaped munchies are a mixed bag. They're typically less processed than potato chips and contain a bit more fiber. But oil and added sugars "can take veggies from nutritional superstars to a treat or an indulgence," says Marisa Moore, R.D., an Atlanta-based spokeswoman for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. A fresh snap pea or baby carrot is your best bet (duh!). But if you're jonesing for a salty snack, a baked snap pea is better than a greasy potato chip.



Q I'm training for a marathon. Am I destined to have black toenails?

A No. You can maintain that pretty pedi while gearing up for your 26.2. A black nail usually indicates that there is a subungual hematoma, or mass of dried blood, under it; this is caused by hitting the front of the shoe repetitively, says Jeffrey DeSantis, a podiatrist for the American Podiatric Medical Association, who sees this condition in 40 to 50 percent of his patients who run frequently. A properly fitting sneaker is the best prevention, so seek out a store that specializes in running shoes and find ones with a large toe box. If you do get the dreaded runner's toenail(s) and are in pain, see a podiatrist. Beauty secret: Two coats of an opaque shade like Sally **Hansen Miracle Gel in Wine Stock** (\$10, drugstores) will cover even the blackest of nails.

DRINKING MORE WATER HAS NEVER BEEN SO EASY!

Sparkling Water Makers at home help Americans drink 3 MORE GLASSES OF WATER PER DAY



One of the simplest changes you can make to lead a healthier life is drinking more water. SodaStream makes it easy.

A recent survey among 3,680 Americans discovered that people with a SodaStream consume 3 more glasses of water and water-based drinks than those without a SodaStream. It's not surprising, because SodaStream makes ordinary water exciting and more fun to drink, by turning it into sparkling water and flavored sparkling water in seconds.



sodastream water made exciting



Q What the heck is kefir and why would I want to drink it?

A First of all, let's get the pronunciation right. The emphasis is on the second syllable: keh-FEER (not like the 24 actor). This beverage is made by fermenting milk with certain bacteria; the result is similar to drinkable yogurt but with about three times the probiotics. Its slightly sour flavor isn't for everyone, but kefir makes a good addition to smoothies, and some people like to drink it straight. "Kefir's combination of protein and fat will keep you satisfied longer than other beverages," says Alissa Rumsey, R.D., a dietitian at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center. "Just stick with traditional plain; avoid flavored versions, which contain added sugars."

Q Why does my eyelid twitch sometimes?

A This annoying sensation is common and probably nothing to worry about. It's not typically associated with a medical problem. "Although we're not sure what causes occasional eye twitching, if it's persistent, you should have it evaluated," says Allen Ho, M.D., the director of retina research at Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia. Because stress or lack of sleep may play a role, getting plenty of zzz's or chilling out with a yoga class may help you ditch the twitch.





Trainer **Tip**

Fitness and nutrition expert Harley Pasternak, a FITNESS advisory board member, is the author of the forthcoming *5 Pounds*. His celebrity clients include Jessica Simpson, Katy Perry and Megan Fox.

• What's your go-to order when dining out?

A People consume about 200 more calories a day when they eat out compared with when they cook at home, according to a Public Health Nutrition study. To avoid that trap, here are six of my favorite restaurant meals.



Japanese Miso soup, seaweed salad and a palm-size amount of sashimi



French Salmon tartare and ratatouille



Italian Seafood soup and a side salad with vinaigrette



Thai Chicken satay and green papaya salad



Chinese Wonton soup and steamed whole fish



Brunch An omelet of one yolk and four egg whites, and a side of berries







When you have had a stressful day or find yourself in a sour mood, grab some pals and head outside. A recent study from the University of Michigan Medical School found that group walks in nature reduced stress and feelings of depression and increased positive emotions like enthusiasm and excitement. "We know that exercise has health benefits, but where you do it counts. More than exercise alone, walking in the natural environment is what improved participants' mental and emotional well-being," says study coauthor Melissa Marselle, Ph.D. "The social aspect served as a motivator for getting people outside." Although the study's walks occurred in nature reserves and the countryside, Marselle notes that a walk around a local park can have the same benefits.

Sculpting strong, sexy shoulders is as easy as one, two, three. New research from the American Council on Exercise revealed the most effective exercises for defining your delts. Grab some weights and add this triplethreat sequence to your workout. Do three sets of 10 to 12 reps each.



- Standing with feet hipwidth apart and a dumbbell in each hand, lift weights to shoulders, palms facing forward and elbows bent at 90 degrees.
- Press weights upward until arms are extended overhead, then lower to starting position.

45-Degree Incline Row

- Lie chest-down on a 45-degree incline bench, holding a dumbbell in each hand with an overhand grip so palms face you. Let arms hang straight down toward the floor.
- Pull elbows toward ceiling by bending arms and squeezing shoulder blades together, then lower to starting position.

Seated Rear Lateral Raise

- Sitting on the edge of a bench with a dumbbell in each hand and arms hanging straight down, palms facing each other, hinge upper body forward.
- Keep back straight and raise arms out to sides until elbows are at shoulder height, perpendicular to torso, then lower to starting



#SWEATYSATURDAY

Mark your calendar: February 28 is Sweaty Saturday, a day devoted to celebrating fitness and health. Brought to you by FITNESS and the organization Sweaty Saturday, the festivities take place in New York City and Los Angeles and will bring together each city's finest fitness studios, health brands and wellness experts. Studios will offer special classes, goodies, raffles and giveaways. A portion of the proceeds will go to Partnership for a Healthier America, which is working to help solve the childhood obesity crisis. Not in NYC or LA? Get in on the action and follow the fun with #makefithappen and #sweatysaturday. Plus, score all-new moves from top trainers and find out more info about the day's happenings at fitnessmagazine.com/ sweatysaturday.

Light as a Feather

Keep warm without the bulk. These downalternative pieces are insulated but lighter and thinner, so you'll be très chic-and toasty!until the spring thaw.

The North Face ThermoBall Hybrid hoodie (\$180, thenorthface.com)

Athleta Polartec Alpha Slice vest (\$148, athleta.com)

Sierra Designs Women's Capiz skirt (\$95, sierradesigns.com)



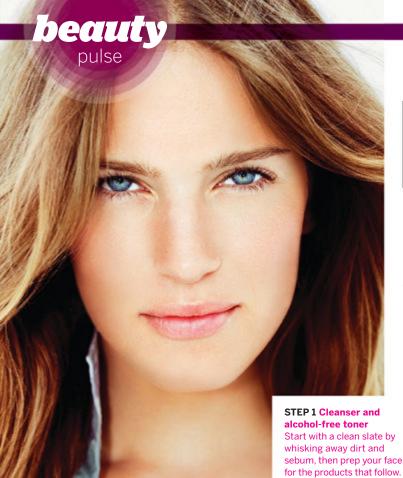
Work hard, play hard Heading from barre class to the bar? New research shows that people tend to drink more alcohol on days they exercise. That's not to say you have to skip happy hour; just be mindful of how much booze you consume and avoid the calorie-bomb cocktails.

Source: Health Psychology



Skechers GOwalk, built from the top to the bottom with lightweight and flexible materials that allow your foot to flex and move naturally. It's the perfect walking shoe.





tace lime

Overwhelmed by all the potions and lotions for your complexion? We asked Renée Rouleau, a celebrity aesthetician and a FITNESS advisory board member, to create a cheat sheet for how to layer them every morning. When in doubt, use her rule of thumb: Apply products in order from thinnest to thickest.

STEP 2 Serum Make sure your skin is damp so the ingredients penetrate deeper.

STEP 3 Moisturizer It protects skin and doubles as a sealant, locking in the goodies you've applied.

STEP 4 SPF Put on chemical-free sunscreenthose containing zinc oxide or titanium dioxide-next so it can reflect the sun's rays.

Simple Skincare Micellar Cleansing Water (\$7, drugstores)

Micro Water

Dr. Jart+ Dermaclear

(\$32, sephora.com)

Orico London Orange Micellar Cleansing

Water and Make-up

Remover (\$24.

dermstore.com)

(Chemical-based sunscreens should be applied before moisturizer.)

STEP 5 Eye cream Because it reflects light to soften the appearance of lines, you want it on top.

THE CUTTING EDGE

Your shaving experience just got a lot smoother. The Venus Swirl (\$13, drugstores) features a chrome-plated ball at the base of its head that allows the razor to pivot around your curves (no more knee or ankle nicks!). The five blades are the thinnest yet for a superclose shave, while a micro-comb helps grab stubborn stubble.



It's the no-sink-required cleansing craze that Parisians rave about: micellar water. Pour a few drops on a cotton pad and wipe over your face. Tiny molecules attract impurities and offer a deep clean without stripping your skin. Stash a bottle in your gym bag and place one on your nightstand for fuss-free face washing. Go Figure

foundation shades at Sephora stores. To ace your base, the chain created the complimentary Color IQ service. Your face is scanned with a device to determine your skin tone, and product suggestions appear in your in-box.

A real head-scratcher Your scalp is home to dirt and oil, especially if you're a workout enthusiast, says lan McCabe, a celebrity hairstylist. Once a week, use a scalp scrub. Try Kiehl's Deep Micro-Exfoliating Scalp Treatment (\$20, kiehls.com), which contains argan shells to slough debris.

FEBRUARY 28 IT'S TIME TO GET SWEATY

NEW YORK + LOS ANGELES

FITNESS magazine and Sweaty Saturday are partnering to bring you a day entirely devoted to fitness, health and wellness. On **FEBRUARY 28** head to your favorite participating studio—or try somewhere new—for special classes, celeb trainers, limited edition goodies and exciting giveaways all while giving back to the Partnership for a Healthier America.



For more on how to get fit and give back visit **FITNESSMAGAZINE.COM/SWEATYSATURDAY**

ABOUT PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHIER AMERICA

PHA is devoted to ensuring the health of our nation's youth by bringing together, public, private and nonprofit leaders to broker meaningful commitments and develop strategies to end childhood obesity.



TICKER SHOCK

Being stressed affects women's hearts more than men's, a new study found. After nerve-racking tasks, women had less blood flow to their tickers. Because stress can be stealthy, the first step is to recognize it, says James Beckerman, M.D., a FITNESS advisory board member and the author of Heart to Start. And luckily for you, one of the best

> Source: Journal of the American College of Cardiology

Go **Figure**

Number of hospital patients who were given an antibiotic, according to a recent oneday survey. Whoa! Overuse of the lifesaving meds can lead to superbugs—antibioticresistant bacteria that are difficult to treat. Always ask your doc if an antibiotic is truly needed and what testing will be done to make sure she prescribes the right one.

> Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Stay on your feet during your next work confab. It may pay off in the inspiration department. Standing triggers the fight-or-flight response, which preps the body to act, making you more engaged and creative, a study from Washington University in Saint Louis suggests. Plus, you're less territorial when you're not sitting in a chair—and more willing to share your ideas, explains study author Andrew Knight, Ph.D.



Can't Stop, Won't Stop

Dragging on a run? Focus on a target in the distance, like a street sign blocks away, and imagine reaching it. Narrowing your attention can make the distance seem shorter and help you hightail it there, a New York University study found. "Notice specific features—like the bumper sticker slapped on the sign-to help train your focus," says study author Emily Balcetis, Ph.D. And beware of potholes!

Recharge your brain People who constantly toggle between different media devices have less gray matter in their brains. Researchers aren't sure why, but turning off email and social media notifications so that you can unitask and designating daily no-tech time can't hurt.

Source: PLOS One

IT'S TASTIER THAN MILK. PEOPLE WITH TASTE BUDS SAID SO.



Silk Vanilla
Almondmilk is
deliciously smooth
and most people
prefer its taste to milk.
Try for yourself.

Silk helps you bloom

#silkbloom



Every day, 49 percent of U.S. adults eat a sandwich, consuming an extra 300 calories and 600 milligrams of sodium (holy bologna!) than those who don't. Ask the deli counter for slices from a whole turkey breast or ham (they're less processed). Swap mayo for smashed avocado or white beans, and choose bread with "wholewheat flour" as the first ingredient.

Source: Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics



Apples to Apples Move over, McIntosh: Washington State University food scientists found that compared with other common apple varieties, Granny Smiths contained the highest amount of nondigestible compounds, including fiber and antioxidant polyphenols, that promote the growth of "good" gut bacteria. "These bacteria may help decrease inflammation and prevent obesity," says study author Giuliana Noratto, an assistant professor in the university's School of Food Science. For more about how to boost beneficial bacteria and stay slim, see page 91.



eat 200 more servings of veggies every year.

Here's how Jennifer McLagan, the author of the

cookbook Bitter, mellows out three ingredients.

Brussels sprouts Shred them raw in salads or cook them quickly (the longer they break down, the more bitter they become) by searing in a pan until caramelized.

Broccoli rabe Boil it 10 seconds, then drain, to tame its pungent flavor. Or pair rabe with a fat (turkey sausage or bacon) and some heat (cayenne or jalapeño).

Radicchio Char it in a cast-iron skillet, then sprinkle with blue cheese or feta, or sauté it until just wilted and combine with a sweeter vegetable like carrots. Go **Figure**

422

Extra calories that regular breakfast eaters burn per day compared with people who often skip the meal.

Morning noshers tend to be more active, perhaps because fueling up translates to more energy. For delicious and easy recipes, head to fitnessmagazine.com/breakfast.

Source: American Journal of Clinical Nutrition

Treat yourself When you add gym classes to your calendar, pencil in Sunday brunch too. Three-quarters of successful dieters plan weekly indulgences, according to a new survey. What's more, 96 percent of respondents gained weight after a diet that ditched their favorite foods.

Source: Weight Watchers

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It keeps you fueled. It keeps you satisfied. Because Sargento® String Cheese is a natural source of protein. With 8 grams per serving, it beats out almonds, eggs and peanut butter — every time.

See Nutrition Information for Fat and Saturated Fat Content
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There are few things more #badass than a snapshot of you carving down a mountain or catching a huge wave. Now capturing these priceless moments is more affordable than ever, thanks to a trio of budget-friendly action cameras.



this rugged camera snorkeling or scuba diving; it withstands up to 131 feet of water. It shoots video in low light and snaps up to five five-megapixel photos per second for an on-the-go sequence. (\$130, gopro.com)



MHD 2.0 Action Camera This video camera has the longest battery life— 150 minutes—of the bunch. It's waterproof up to 32 feet, takes five-megapixel shots and comes with a bike mount. (\$90, monoprice.com)



Polaroid Cube Tiny enough to slip into your pocket, it records video for up to 90 minutes and takes six-megapixel photos. Although it can handle rain and splashes, it's not meant for serious water sports. (\$100, polaroidcube.com) Go Figure

24

Percentage of bosses who have busted their employees for using a sick-day excuse by checking their social media. While taking a mental-health day is sometimes necessary, exercise a little common sense before posting that post-hike selfie.

Source: CareerBuilder survey



PLEASE DON'T STOP THE MUSIC

Dragging through your HIIT sessions? Crank up the tunes. Recent research shows that jamming to your favorite songs during intense interval training makes it more enjoyable, pushing you to work harder. Get your next cardio session from Motion Traxx (Android and iOS), an app that leads you through HIIT-based audio workouts—choose from treadmill and Tabata and many more—backed by beat-matched tunes. Bonus: New users get five free workouts when they register.

Turn Up the Burn

Steamy studios are the coolest workout trend. First made popular by hot yoga, now Pilates, barre and even Spinning classes are cranking up the thermostat to help participants increase flexibility and boost fat burn. But experts warn that a sweaty environment can lead to dehydration and heat exhaustion if you're not careful. "Remember to drink water before, during and after

class," says Haemi Choi, M.D., a clinical assistant professor of family medicine at Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, Illinois. "And if you feel lightheaded, dizzy or nauseated, stop and take a break in a cooler place."

Happy shopping Online shoppers, ThriveMarket.com is your new not-so-guilty pleasure. The site offers more than 3,000 healthy packaged foods at nearly 50 percent off retail prices. An annual membership costs \$60, but for every one sold, a free membership is donated to a family in need.











After you wake up, squeeze half a lemon into a cup of hot water and sip it on an empty stomach. "Vitamin C helps reduce inflammation throughout the body, including the skin," explains Joshua Zeichner, M.D., the director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. The result: Your complexion looks better.



Use your knuckles to gently massage face wash into your skin in a circular motion to increase blood flow and reduce puffiness, advises Renée Rouleau, a celebrity aesthetician and FITNESS advisory board member. Look for formulas that contain peppermint, which dilates blood vessels to give skin a healthy flush. We like **Renée Rouleau** Luxe Mint Cleansing Gel (\$37, reneerouleau.com).



Customize your cover-up.

New and improved concealers
won't settle in fine lines, offer
antiaging benefits to treat skin,
and give you as much—or
as little—coverage as you want.

Sheer

Look for a brush applicator for a soft-focused finish. Try **Jouer Luminizing Liquid Highlighter** (\$39, jouercosmetics.com).

Medium

Choose a wand to distribute a natural-looking yet decent dose of coverage. Try Urban Decay Naked Skin Weightless Complete Coverage Concealer (\$28, sephora.com).

Full

Crayons conceal even the darkest circles—as well as your latest night—and won't budge. Try Pixi by Petra Undercover Crayon (\$14, target.com).

Dot concealer under each eye in an upside-down triangle, including the sides of your nose and along your cheekbones. Blend for a luminous effect.



LUXE MINT

CLEANSING

GEL

Energizing formula

to refresh tired skin

8 FLO: 1232 ml

This DIY de-puffing combo feels almost as amazing as sitting at the spa with cucumbers on your eyelids. Store **Peter Thomas Roth Cucumber De-Tox De-Puffing Eye-Cubes** (\$50 for six, sephora.com) in the freezer; when you need them, place the gel pods in the provided pouch and trace it along your brow bone and under your eyes. The pods contain cucumber, green tea and caffeine to help deflate bags, smooth fine lines and soothe sensitive skin. Seal the deal with an eye cream that has a cooling stainless steel—tipped applicator. Try one of these to solve your top peeper problem:



Wrinkles

Benefit Puff Off! (\$29, benefit cosmetics.com) has light-diffusing pink particles to "iron out" fine lines.

Redness

Physicians Formula Super CC Color Correction + Care CC Blurring Eye Cream SPF 30 (\$13, drugstores) packs green-tinted pearl pigments to tone down the red.

luminizing liquid highlighter

one

Raccoon eyes

First Aid Beauty Eye Duty Triple Remedy (\$36, sephora.com) brightens dark circles with licorice root and caffeine.





Bypass bold eye makeup and reach for white eyeliner, which will extend and brighten the whites of your eyes when you wear it on your bottom inner rim. We like **Sonia Kashuk Dramatically Brightening Kajal** (\$9, target.com). Next, brush a few coats of mascara on your top lashes only. Leaving the bottom ones bare will draw attention upward, giving your lids a lifted look. Try **Origins GinZing Brightening Mascara** (\$19, origins.com), whose blue and black pearl pigments make eyes appear more vibrant.





Flip your head upside down for five seconds to rev up your circulation and get a rosy glow, Rouleau says. Add a pop of blush to the apples of your cheeks. Pink shades complement fair skin tones, and coral looks striking on medium and dark tones. Try **Bobbi Brown Brightening Brick in Pastel Pink and Coral** (\$46 each, bobbibrowncosmetics.com).







Nude lip color will wash you out, while red requires too much precision to apply when you're feeling groggy. Your go-to shade: juicy peach, which will perk up your face. Pick your stick:

Balm

Clarins Instant Light Lip Balm Perfector in Coral (\$23, clarins.com)

Gloss

Revion Ultra HD Lip Lacquer in Sunstone (\$9, drugstores)

Lipstick

Chanel Rouge Coco Shine Hydrating Sheer Lipshine in Désinvolte (\$36, chanel.com)



Awaken your senses with a zesty fragrance. Choose one with invigorating citrus notes, including bergamot, mandarin and lemon. For an added pick-me-up (and to prolong the life of perfume), stash it in the fridge. It will feel ultrarefreshing when you spritz it on. Get a whiff of this: Tocca Beauty Eau de Parfum in Bianca (\$34, tocca.com).









Fast-forward your get-ready routine and reclaim your time. These four beauty breakthroughs pack a one-two punch so you can skip several steps every morning. Now get out the door, gorgeous!

By Heather Muir Photographs by Nathan Martin













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Invite your friends and family to cheer you on and enjoy the Race Day Festival featuring editors and celebrities, live music, free samples, fun activities, awards ceremony and more!













Start your day on the plus side of delicious with Quaker® Real Medleys®. Try new Summer Berry Granola as a delicious snack or topping that's loaded with crunchy clusters plus real fruit. And there's new Banana Walnut Oatmeal+, complete with super grains and packed with bananas and crunchy nuts. #QuakerUp



Kneeling Waves

Targets shoulders, arms, abs, obliques

- Kneel on floor with your left side facing ends of rope; hold ends in each hand, elbows by sides and hands pointing to left.
- Create alternating waves by quickly lifting right hand near shoulder level while lowering left arm toward floor.
- Continue alternating as rapidly as possible for 30 seconds.
- Switch sides (to face opposite direction) and repeat.
- Do 2 sets.



Switch-Step Press

Targets shoulders, arms, legs

- Holding ends of rope in each hand, palms facing each other, stand with feet hip-width apart.
- Step right leg back, bending left knee 90 degrees, then lift rope ends, extending arms overhead
- Quickly whip rope to floor, switching leg positions (right leg steps forward, left leg steps back) as you lower.
- Raise rope ends overhead as you switch leg positions once more.
- Continue alternating sides for 30 seconds. Do 2 sets.



Wood Chop

Targets shoulders, arms, abs, obliques, legs

- Holding ends of rope in each hand, palms facing each other, stand with feet hip-width apart.
- Step left leg back and bend right knee 90 degrees as you twist torso to right, bringing ends of rope by right hip.
- Raise ends overhead toward left as you twist torso to left, simultaneously switching leg positions (left leg steps forward with knee bent, right leg steps back). Whip rope down, bringing hands by left hip, in a wood-chopping motion.
- Reverse motion back to right twist position and continue alternating for 30 seconds.
 - Do 2 sets.

Cowboy Plank

Targets shoulders, arms, abs

- Start on floor in full plank position facing rope, balancing on palms and toes (step feet wide apart for stability); hold end of rope with left hand.
- Keeping hips level and body still, whip rope by lifting left arm to shoulder level and quickly lowering it back down.
- Continue for 30 seconds; switch arms and repeat.



Corkscrew Twist

Targets shoulders, bleeps, abs, butt, legs

- Stand with feet slighty wider than shoulder width, holding ends of rope in each hand, palms pressed together.
- Lower into a squat and, keeping bent elbows tucked by sides, spin rope clockwise for 30 seconds.
- Reverse direction, spinning rope counterclockwise for 30 seconds to complete set.
- Do 2 sets.



Balance Whip

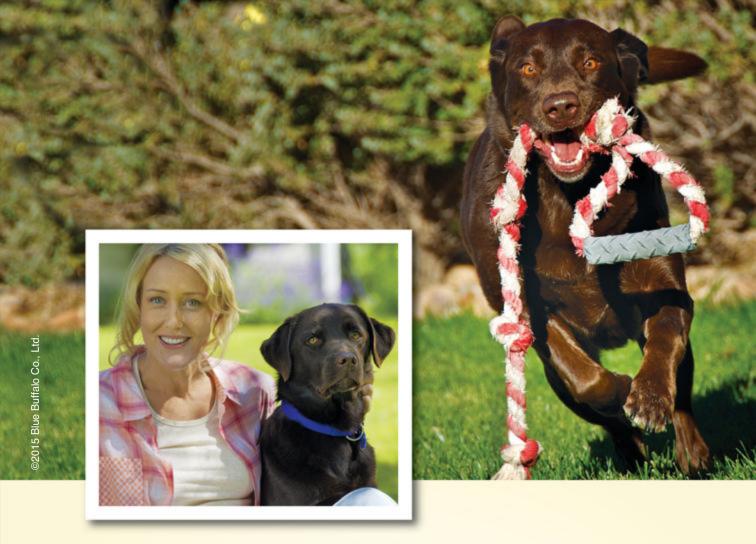
Targets arms, abs, butt, legs

- Holding ends of rope in each hand, palms facing each other, stand with feet hip-width apart.
- Lift right leg behind you, balancing on left leg, knee slightly bent.
- Raise and then lower both arms simultaneously to whip rope up and down, creating a wave pattern.
- Continue for 30 seconds, then switch legs and repeat.
 Do 2 sets.



ROPE TRICKS Watch the video of this routine at fitnessmagazine.com/battleropes. On the go? Get the iPad edition of FITNESS. Find out how at fitnessmagazine.com/digitalnow.

50



"My boy has food sensitivities. Now I feed him BLUE Basics and he's never looked or felt better."

BLUE Basics® is a limited-ingredient diet designed to minimize the food sensitivities some dogs experience, while providing them with a delicious and nutritious meal. It always starts with salmon, turkey or duck—proteins not common in dog foods—and includes easily digestible oatmeal, rice and potatoes.

And, when we created BLUE Basics, we were sure to avoid many of the ingredients that can trigger allergic reactions in some dogs.

- NO chicken or beef
- NO corn, wheat or soy
- NO dairy or eggs

If your dog or cat has food sensitivities, ask your veterinarian about BLUE Basics.

BlueBasicsPets.com

Love them like family. Feed them like family.®



Available for dogs and cats.

SMOOTH, FLAWLESS SKIN. YOU'VE EARNED IT.

Whether you love *spinning*, *yoga*, *running* or *cross training*, chances are you're constantly on the move. To help tone every inch, put your flexibility to the test and incorporate this move, inspired by the Venus® Swirl™ razor, into your workout routine.

THE FLEXITWIST

Show your back, shoulders and inner and outer thighs some major love with this full body movement.

- Grab 2 weights, lunge your left leg back and flex your arms out to each side.
- Straighten your right leg and bring your arms overhead.
- C. Pivot your torso to the left and bend your left knee 90 degrees as you bend your elbows to bring the weights in front of your chest.

Maximize the Movement:

To get the most out of the move, return to your lunge position and do 10 reps. Switch sides and repeat. Challenge yourself to 3 sets.





Keep the movement going with the all new Venus® Swirl™— a razor that's made to move just like you, so you can take the legwork out of shaving and let your hard work shine.



5 CONTOUR™ BLADES WITH 6X MORE FLEXIBILITY*



FIRST & ONLY
RAZOR WITH FLEXIBALL**
TECHNOLOGY



HELPS CAPTURE WHAT OTHER RAZORS MISS

#MovesLikeNoOther

NEW Venus Swirl Swirl







THROW YOUR CONTOURS A CURVEBALL.





Burn more than double the calories with every step you take: Hit the stairs—and steal these tips.

Plant your foot.

Most people overuse their quads to scale stairs, but if you land with your heel on the step rather than let it hang off the edge as you climb, you can shift more toning to your hamstrings, says physiologist Michele Olson, Ph.D., a FITNESS advisory board member.

Use your booty.

To really firm your butt muscles, skip every other stair as you walk up, Olson says. Press through your heel and squeeze your cheeks as you stand upright on the next step.

Boost your power.

Trade the elevator for a flight plan: A study in the British Journal of Sports Medicine found that short bouts of stair climbing (starting with one two-minute session and increasing to five) five days a week for eight weeks increase women's cardio capacity by 17 percent. "You're anaerobically training whenever you take the stairs," Olson says.

By Jenna Autuori-Dedić

The **Plan**

All you need is a set of stairs—inside, outside, the stairclimber at the gym—to do these routines by trainer Chris Powell from ABC's *Extreme Weight Loss*. "Pump your arms for more momentum," Powell says. "Or, for extra balance, hold rails."

STAIRCASE SESSION

	SESSION
Time (min)	Activity
0 to 3	Do a dynamic warm-up (one minute each of high knees, butt kicks and side shuffles on flat ground).
3 to 6	Do bear crawls slowly up the stairs, then walk down. (Start on ground in a plank position with hands on first step. Move left foot up a step as you move right hand up a step. Repeat on opposite side; continue alternating.)
6 to 9	Starting at the bottom, slowly jog up the steps and increase your speed as you climb to the top; walk or slowly jog down for safety. Repeat as many times as possible.
9 to 10	Rest and take a water break.
10 to 16	Do five burpees on flat ground, then quickly sprint up the stairs; slowly jog down. Repeat as many times as possible.
16 to 17	Rest.
17 to 21	Do 10 triceps dips. (Sit on first step, heels on ground and palms flat by hips; slide hips forward off step. Bend elbows behind you to lower body, then straighten arms to lift.) Follow with three stair sprints (sprint to the top and walk or slowly jog down three times). Repeat dip-sprint combo as many times as possible.
21 to 22	Rest.
22 to 25	Jump from step to step up stairs with feet together, then walk or slowly jog down. Repeat as many times as possible.
25 to 30	Walk on flat ground to cool down.

CTVIDO	LIMPED	CIRCUIT
SIAIRC	LIMBER	CIRCUII

Time (min)	Activity	RPE*
0 to 3	Warm up. (Start at an easy pace, then increase by one level each minute.)	2 to 4
3 to 6	Step off machine and do dynamic stretches on floor (one minute each of high knees, butt kicks and side shuffles).	2 to 3
6 to 8	Start at a moderate level and take quick steps while holding the handrails.	6
8 to 10	Increase by two levels. Let go of handrails if you can safely balance; otherwise, hold on lightly.	8
10 to 11	Return to moderate level, holding the handrails.	6
11 to 13	Increase by three levels, skipping a step as you climb. Let go of handrails if you can safely balance, or hold on lightly.	9
13 to 16	Return to moderate level, taking single steps (no skipping steps) and holding the handrails. (Let go of rails and pump arms if you can balance.)	6
16 to 18	Increase by two levels.	8
18 to 19	Return to moderate level, holding the handrails.	6
19 to 21	Increase by three levels, skipping a step as you climb. Let go of handrails if you can safely balance, or hold on lightly.	9
21 to 22	Return to moderate level, holding the handrails.	6
22 to 28	Holding handrails, alternate one minute at a near all-out level and one minute at a moderate level. Repeat combo three times.	9.5 and 5
28 to 30	Cool down at a light-moderate level, holding the handrails. Reduce by one level after one minute.	3 to 4

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GET THESE WORKOUTS TO GO! Download the **Motion Traxx app** (Android and iOS) to hear an audio version of these sessions, complete with beat-matched tunes. New users get five free workouts when they register.

*RPE stands for "rate of perceived exertion," where a 1 is a minimal effort and a 10 is an all-out sprint. 



SEARCH **ASICS GO RUN IT.**



1. ICE, ICE BABY

Finally! A stainless steel sipper that will keep our smoothies cold and creamy from blender to bedtime. (Hydro Flask 18-ounce wide-mouth insulated water bottle, \$26, hydroflask.com)

2. HEAD CASE

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3. READ MY WRISTS

Try some sleight of hand: custom beads that spell out your fave phrase in Morse code. Ours says "Move Forward," natch. (Cass Lilien Morse Code Collection bracelet, \$100, casslilien.com)

4. TWINKLE TOES

You don't have to be a prima ballerina to sparkle in slippers. (Cole Haan Manhattan Ballet Studio Collection footwear, \$178, colehaan.com)

5. SWEET TART

Let this cute key lime zip-up brighten your damp days. (Marmot Dash Hybrid jacket, \$125, available March 1 at marmot.com)

By Susan Brickell









NEW YORK AND LA...IT'S TIME TO GET SWEATY!

FITNESS magazine and Sweaty Saturday are partnering to bring you a day entirely devoted to fitness, health and wellness on February 28. Enjoy special classes, celeb trainers and exciting giveaways all while giving back to the Partnership for a Healthier America.

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PICK of the month

AVON 39

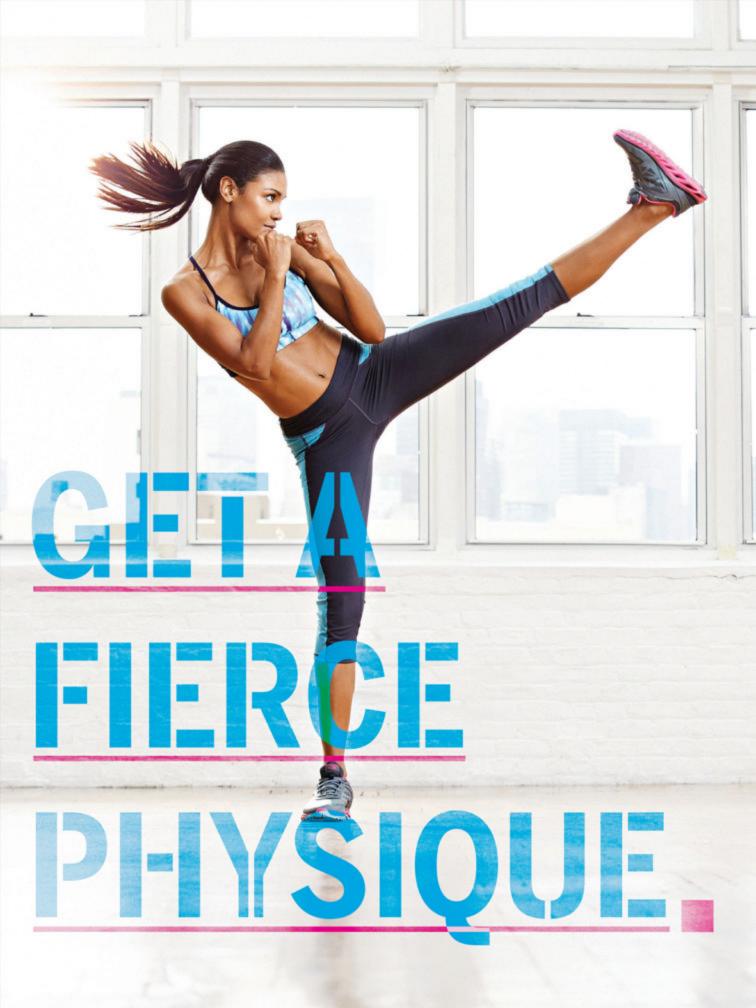
The AVON 39 is a 2-day challenge that asks for everything you've got—and rewards you with blisters, sore muscles and hero status. Whether you walk 13, 26, or the full 39.3 miles, you're crushing fear, doubt and breast cancer—one persistent step and donation at a time. You've got the power. Earn your 39. Register at 39forBC.ORG.













NO DUMBBELLS NO GYM. **NO KIDDING**

> This is about as uncomplicated as it gets: These eight compound moves use zero equipment and will fry and firm the flab-fast. "Use the body you have to create the body you want," says trainer Adam Rosante, a fitness ambassador for C9 by Champion and the author of The 30-Second Body. "You can do anything for 30 seconds"the magic number to hit for every set here— "so put the pedal to the floor for top-notch results." Aim for three rounds of the first four exercises—with 30-second breathers between circuits—then repeat with the next four moves. You're done. You just whipped your cardio and toning at once.

By Mary Christ Anderson Photographs by James Michelfelder

CIRCUIT 1

1. PENCIL SQUAT.

Targets shoulders, abs, butt, inner thighs, calves

- Stand with feet together, arms extended overhead.
- Jump feet shoulder-width apart and squat, touching fingertips to floor between feet.
- ▶ Jump up to return to start position, bringing feet together and pressing arms overhead.
- Do as many reps as you can for 30 seconds.

2. TAP-UP.

Targets shoulders, chest, arms, abs

- Start on floor in plank position, balancing on palms and toes, arms extended and body forming a straight line from head to heels
- Lower chest to floor as you bend elbows close by ribs, then press up to start position.
- ▶ Lift right hand to tap left shoulder, then place palm back on floor.
- Repeat push-up, then switch sides and repeat.
- Continue alternating for 30 seconds, doing as many reps as possible.

MAKE IT EASIER Do modified push-ups on your knees.

WIN THIS LOOK!

Our model is wearing a C9 by

sports bra, \$17; Women's Contrast capris, \$28; and Velocity sneakers,

\$35—all available at target.com. From February 10 through March 17, enter for a chance to win a \$200 Target gift card to style your own C9 outfit by

emailing your name, address and phone number to treeble@fitness

line "C9 style." See page 7 for details.

3. TABLE SAW.

Targets shoulders, triceps, abs, butt

- Sit on floor with knees bent, feet flat, palms on floor beside hips; lift hips a few inches off floor.
- ➤ Press hips up into a tabletop position (body parallel to floor from shoulders to knees) as you extend right leg diagonally up and simultaneously reach left hand to touch right foot.
- Return to start; switch sides and repeat.
- Continue alternating for 30 seconds, doing as many reps as possible.



GONNA MOVE YOU

Trainer Adam Rosante is a master of motivation, right down to the playlists he mixes. Cue up his exclusive-for-you creation at fitnessmagazine.com/hitlist and crush this routine!

- "Bring Em Out," T.I.
- "Breathe," Fabolous
- "All I Do Is Win," DJ Khaled, featuring T-Pain, Ludacris, Snoop Dogg and Rick Ross
- "Go Crazy," Young Jeezy, featuring Jay-Z

"It's All About the Benjamins," Puff Daddy, featuring The

Puff Daddy, featuring The Notorious B.I.G., Lil' Kim and The Lox

- "Pump It Up," Joe Budden
- "La-La-La," Jay-Z
- "California Love," 2Pac, featuring Dr. Dre and Roger Troutman
- "Ms. New Booty," Bubba Sparxxx, Mr. Collipark and Ying Yang Twins
- "X Gon' Give It to Ya," DMX
- "Can't Take My Eyes Off of You," Lauryn Hill



Targets butt, quads, calves

- Stand with feet wider than shoulder width, elbows bent by sides, palms facing forward.
- ◀ Lower into a squat and, raising up on balls of feet, sprint in place.
- Continue for 30 seconds as quickly as possible.

CIRCUIT 2

5. LADDER HOP.

Targets abs, calves

- Start on floor in plank position, balancing on palms and toes, arms extended and body forming a straight line from head to heels.
- Keeping palms planted and shoulders steady, hop both feet one foot forward, then one foot back to start.
- Next, hop both feet two feet forward, then two feet back to start.
- Finally, hop both feet forward close to hands, then back to start to complete 1 rep.
- Do as many reps as possible in 30 seconds.

MAKE IT EASIER Step feet forward one by one rather than hopping to each "rung" of the ladder.



6. WALL CLIMBER.

Targets arms, abs, butt, legs

- Stand with feet hip-width apart, elbows bent by sides and hands in front of shoulders, palms facing forward.
- Quickly alternate bringing knee toward chest (like a high-knees run) as you extend opposite arm overhead: Extend left arm overhead as right knee comes up, then drive left elbow down as right foot returns to floor.
- Repeat, extending right arm overhead as left knee comes up.
- Continue alternating as fast as you can for 30 seconds.







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There are few sensations as miserable as chronic itch—or as mysterious, researchers say. The prickly, tickly sensation isn't fully understood, but there are centers devoted to studying the phenomenon. The way it often works: Something your body deems as suspicious, such as a coarse fabric, penetrates the skin, throwing the immune system into a state of emergency. To protect itself, the body releases chemicals, such as histamines and cytokines, that activate nerve fibers, which then send impulses to alert your brain that you feel itchy.

One thing that's clear is the suffering that itch causes. Among the up to 25 percent of people throughout the world who are dogged at times by chronic itching—for six-plus weeks—some report that they would rather feel pain. And while women put off their derm appointments for acne or suspicious moles, they insist on coming in ASAP when they have an itch, reports Amy Wechsler, M.D., a dermatologist and psychiatrist in New York City. "The number-one cause of itch is dry skin, which women are more prone to getting," Dr. Wechsler adds.

Something making your skin crawl? Here's how to finally get some relief.

"This wool sweater is driving me crazy!"

You most likely have sensitive skin, which means its barrier has cracks in it that allow irritating materials like coarse fibers or harsh detergents to slip in and trigger nerve fibers to send itch signals to the brain, says Gil Yosipovitch, M.D., the director of the Temple Itch Center at Temple University School of Medicine in Philadelphia. It could also be atopic dermatitis (AD), a common, chronic type of eczema (the general term for an itchy rash) that flares up periodically.

Soothe it. If the itch persists after you've banished the sweater to the deep corners of your closet, you probably have AD, explains Matthew Zirwas, M.D., a dermatologist at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center in Columbus. Apply a thin layer of 1 percent hydrocortisone cream to the affected area to calm inflammation within a day. For severe or ongoing cases of AD, you may need to see your doctor for a stronger topical drug like prescription Elidel or Protopic. To help combat dry skin and prevent AD breakouts, slather on fragrance-free lotion or cream postshower—the more parched your skin, the more emollient a product you need—to bolster your skin's barrier and seal in moisture. Apply a thicker layer to rash-prone spots and reapply as needed throughout the day. Don't want to change your wool-wearing ways? Pop on a protective base layer such as a silk shirt, which is more tightly woven than other fabrics, to prevent coarse sweater strands from poking your skin. Or buy wool clothing made with finer fibers (splurge on that cashmere top—doctor's orders!), which are less likely to cause irritation.

"My feet are on fire."

The obvious suspect is athlete's foot. This fungal infection, which

How Not to Scratch an Itch

Keep your fingernails away! Scratching may offer short-term relief, but it leaves little cuts on the skin, which can signal the immune system to release even more itch-inducing chemicals. It may also trigger the production of the feelgood chemical serotonin, according to preliminary research in animals. Problem is, serotonin can also activate nerves that heighten itch intensity. So the more you scratch, the more you itch. Here's how to end this vicious cycle.

CHILL OUT

Some itch and pain pathways overlap, and one can override the other. Try applying a cold compress or chilling your moisturizer before use. "The cold sensation will become more dominant and alleviate itching," explains Gil Yosipovitch, M.D., of the Temple Itch Center.

DE-STRESS DAILY

Do yoga, tai chi or any exercise that helps you relax. Stress hormones cause the release of inflammatory compounds that activate nerve fibers and weaken the skin barrier, making it prone to dryness and foreign invaders, both of which can worsen itch.

OCCUPY YOURSELF

Distraction activates parts of the brain that lessen the itch sensation and the desire to scratch in women, a recent study in PlosOne found. Read an engrossing book or call a friend, says Richard Fried, M.D., Ph.D., a dermatologist and psychologist in Yardley, Pennsylvania.

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS

Place your hand over the itch and repeat the mantra "smooth and soothe." Sounds corny, but thinking positive thoughts may help take the edge off the itch, Dr. Fried suggests. Outbreaks of psoriasis (a skin disease characterized by red, itchy patches) cleared up more quickly when sufferers listened to a meditative recording in addition to their usual treatment, a classic study in Psychosomatic Medicine revealed.

causes scaly skin and often crops up between toes, loves damp environments, so you may have picked it up in the gym locker room or even from wearing sweaty running shoes.

Soothe it. Treat athlete's foot with an over-the-counter antifungal spray like Tinactin or Lotrimin; if that doesn't work within two weeks, see your doctor, who may prescribe a more potent topical or oral med. And don't scratch, which will make the itch worse! Use a separate washcloth or pouf for your feet when showering and towel off your feet last, then throw the towel in the wash. To prevent the fungus in the first place, wear flip-flops in wet public areas like the swimming pool and the shower at the gym and try not to wear the same shoes every day, so they have time to air out. You can also use over-thecounter antifungal powders to keep your feet dry, but not baby powder, which actually feeds the fungus, says Cameron Rokhsar, M.D., an assistant professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City.

"I break out in hives when I run in warm weather."

You may be experiencing heat hives, officially known as cholinergic urticaria. Increases in internal body temperature during exercise, especially running, or even as a result of extreme stress can trigger these patches of itchy welts, as can exposure to heat in saunas and hot baths. Exactly why this happens isn't known, but it may be related to a problem with sweating, says Gyohei Egawa, M.D., Ph.D., a professor of dermatology at Kyoto University in Japan. His research shows that people who sweat too little are particularly vulnerable, probably because their bodies have a hard time cooling off.

Nearly 20 percent of women are allergic to nickel, which is often in jewelry.

Soothe it. The hives will vanish within an hour after you stop running, but you can apply an ice pack to the irritated skin to speed the process. Move your workouts to an air-conditioned gym. Or practice being in the heat by exercising for a few minutes until you break out, stopping for the day, then trying again the next day, and so on, until your body acclimates. Some doctors suggest taking an antihistamine an hour before you work out, but that rarely works, Dr. Egawa says, because histamine isn't at the root of the problem.

"My new necklace gave me a rash."

Like almost 20 percent of the female population, you probably have a nickel allergy, which is a form of contact dermatitis, a condition in which a specific compound activates the immune system. The more body piercings you have, the likelier you are to develop it. One theory is that because most earring studs contain nickel and they're inserted immediately upon piercing, the skin associates nickel with trauma. Dr. Zirwas says. For a small percentage of sufferers, eating foods that contain nickel—whole grains, nuts, beans and canned foods—may exacerbate the itch.

Soothe it. Apply a 1 percent hydrocortisone cream to the rash as needed and avoid contact with nickel to eliminate the itch within two weeks to (if you've had it for a while) two months, Dr. Zirwas recommends. To limit your exposure to common nickel-infused metals, wear only platinum jewelry, choose coated fasteners and zippers (or cover them yourself with clear nail polish), opt for plastic or titanium eyeglass frames and cover smartphones and tablets with a nonmetallic case.

"My tush feels soooo uncomfortable in cycling class."

Sounds like you've got pruritus ani, or itchy butt. Many sufferers find the condition too embarrassing to bring up to their doctor; and, in taking matters into their own hands (by obsessively washing or applying ointment to the area), they make the situation worse. What prompts the condition is unknown, but, surprisingly, it's *not* caused by sweating during exercise and can happen to anyone, according to Richard Billingham, M.D., an emeritus clinical professor at the University of Washington in Seattle. **Soothe it.** Keep in mind that poor hygiene is rarely the cause. Overcleaning, however, is an irritant, Dr. Billingham warns. So wipe your business with wet toilet paper to clean more effectively but blot dry to limit irritation, he recommends. Also apply cornstarch to the area to absorb any remaining wetness and/or leave a square of cotton (not gauze or toilet paper) in place during the day. Try to normalize bowel movements, because diarrhea can be a source of excessive wiping; avoid drinking too much fluid. And skip the creams and ointments, which aren't effective, Dr. Billingham says. You'll be back in the saddle—working on the kind of hot butt you actually want-in no time.

IN THE HOT SEAT

A sedentary lifestyle makes you a sitting duck for heart disease, diabetes and obesity-even if you work out regularly. Follow our easy advice to increase energy, rev your metabolism and get your butt moving.





I'M A PRETTY HEALTHY PERSON, BUT THERE'S A TERRIBLE HABIT THAT I DO EVERY SINGLE DAY. I'M ACTUALLY DOING IT RIGHT NOW. AND I BET YOU ARE, TOO.

The thing is, we all know that sitting is slowly killing us. Our butt-in-the-seat lifestyle—as in desk job, commuting, *Game of Thrones* marathons—is raising our risk for obesity (one study found that for every two hours a day that women spent sitting and watching TV, they had a 23 percent higher risk) and cancer (a 2014 meta-analysis suggested that every two hours of sitting increases your risk for certain cancers by 8 to 10 percent), as well as diabetes, heart disease and early death (for every two hours of daily sitting while watching TV, your risk for those three increases by 20, 15 and 13 percent, respectively).

"The human body hasn't changed over the last several hundred years, but the way we live has," says James A. Levine, M.D., Ph.D., the author of Get Up! Why Your Chair Is Killing You and What You Can Do About It. "We've gone from an agricultural lifestyle, in which we spent only a few hours each day sitting, to one in which the average American worker sits for 12 to 15 hours a day." If life-threatening diseases aren't enough to freak you out, there are more immediate effects: lower energy, muscle atrophy, reduced mobility in our joints and a saggy rear end, says Jill Miller, the creator of Yoga Tune Up, a fitness program that improves posture and relieves pain. But there's a twofold problem here: First, we're creatures of habit, and the vast majority of us *really* aren't interested in standing all day. (Hello, I'm in a chair, even as I write about why that's so bad.) Second, standing up all the time isn't amazing, either: As anyone who's ever waited tables can tell you, being on your feet for eight hours can be exhausting, painful and even bad for your health. "Standing puts greater strain on the circulatory system and on the legs, feet and back," says Alan Hedge, Ph.D., the director of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Research Laboratory at Cornell University.

If sitting too much is bad and standing too much is also bad, what's the answer? The experts are trying to figure that out. "It's clear that we shouldn't be sitting for extended periods, but when it comes to official recommendations, we're not there yet," says Peter Katzmarzyk, Ph.D., the associate executive director for population and public health sciences at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center at Louisiana State University. "It takes decades of research to establish guidelines like the ones that exist for physical activity." Until then, FITNESS has put together a plan for you backed by the early science. And get this: The strategies are surprisingly easy to follow. Trust me—I tried them.

SIT LESS, STAND MORE

It's all about finding the right balance. If you're an on-the-move type, that may mean being on your feet for most of the day and sprinkling in a few sitting breaks to take pressure off your back. "I stand while leading my classes, but standing is also my preferred mode of working; I stood 70 or 80 percent of the time while writing my book," says Miller, the author of *The Roll Model: A Step-by-Step Guide to Erase Pain, Improve Mobility, and Live Better in Your Body*.

On the other hand, if you're a typical desk jockey or can't stay focused while on your feet, the right schedule might look more like this: Sit when you need to and take a 10-minute standing break once an hour. To ease neck and back strain, it's important for several of your breaks from sitting to also be breaks from typing. Step away from the computer to make a call or do some gentle exercises (see "Must-Do Moves," on the facing page).

MAKE IT WORK It's totally OK to set a timer until you get into the habit. Luckily, I have a built-in reminder: I drink a ton of water. I've started using my at-least-hourly

IT'S THE DEVIL IN DISGUISE: YOUR OFFICE CHAIR JUST MIGHT BE HELL ON WHEELS FOR YOUR HEALTH.

bathroom trips (TMI?) as reminders to spend a few extra minutes standing. When I get back to my desk, I stay on my feet while I check my to-do list, organize papers, open mail or (OK, fine) check social media. And those stretches? They feel amazing—who cares if I look weird at my desk? In fact, the most common reaction I get from coworkers is "Ah, man, I need to do that, too!"

SIT AND STAND PROPERLY

Posture is key: Hunching forward causes pain; compresses your lungs, thus reducing their capacity and depleting you of energy; and puts extra stress on your neck and back. "Every inch your head hangs forward translates to an extra 10 pounds of weight on your spine," Miller says.

Movement is also crucial. Translation: Fidget! Try to shift sitting positions every 15 minutes or so (put one foot up on your chair, cross one ankle over the other knee, contract and release your glutes). If you're standing, shift your weight from one foot to the other or lift one leg up on your desk in standing pigeon pose.

MAKE IT WORK I'm a pretty antsy person, so I shift around a lot in my chair anyway. After catching myself hunching toward my computer screen one too many times, I grab two of Miller's Yoga Tune Up balls (\$12, yogatuneup.com) and nestle them right behind my upper back (a tennis ball

Must-Do Moves

Fight droopy desk butt with this simple plan. Do these office-friendly stretches from Jill Miller, the creator of Yoga Tune Up, several times a day. If your chair has wheels, position it against a wall for stability.

BREATH DIVE

- **GLUTE REBOOT**
- HIP-**FLEXOR STRETCH**

- Stand with feet hip-width apart. Inhale as you sweep arms overhead to clasp hands.
- Hold breath for 10 to 15 seconds and tighten every muscle in body, attempting to pull hands apart and to spread the floor apart with feet.
- Exhale and return hands to sides. Let breath return to normal, then repeat 10 times.
- Stand facing a chair. Hinge at hips and place forearms on seat, allowing both knees to bend slightly.
- Contract core and buttocks as you raise right foot toward ceiling, keeping spine neutral. Hold for 5 seconds, then slowly lower. Repeat 5 times, then switch sides and repeat.
- Facing chair, step right foot onto seat and reach forward to rest hands on top of chair for stability. Bend left knee toward ground while contracting left gluteal muscles.
- Engage leg and hip muscles as if pulling both feet toward each other.
- Brace core, breathe deeply and hold for 30 seconds to 1 minute; switch sides and repeat.



would work, too). I get a nice, gentle massage, and I have to stay upright to avoid letting them slip out of place—automatic good posture.

CHOOSE SOMETHING YOU'LL ACTUALLY DO

Gadgets and gear can motivate you to move (see "Gear Guide," on page 78, for our favorites), but some of us just won't rack up treadmill miles in the middle of a cubicle farm, Katzmarzyk says. "People get standing and walking desks, use them a lot at first and then taper off until they're mostly sitting again," he explains. This also means that if you are into walking or pedaling, you should ease in—add a bit of movement to your day at a time—so you don't burn out.

health report

Gear Guide

Standing and moving are free, but a little equipment can make it easier (and more fun!). A few of our faves:



ADJUSTABLE DESK

Lower the **Ikea Bekant** when you need to sit, raise it when you're ready to stand. (\$489, ikea-usa.com)



SIT-STAND CONVERTER

Stuck in a corporate cubicle? The **Varidesk** converts your desk into an adjustable sit-stand situation. (From \$275, varidesk.com)



BIKE DESK

Laptop users who love indoor cycling should try the **FitDesk v.2.0 Pedal Desk**. (\$300, thefitdesk.com)



BALANCE BOARD

Add a little challenge to your standing hours by spending some of them on the **IndoBoard**, a surfboard-inspired device that throws you slightly off-balance to engage the muscles in your legs and core. (\$150, indoboard.com)

REGULAR WORKOUTS AREN'T ENOUGH TO OFFSET THE 12 TO 15 HOURS THAT MOST AMERICANS SIT EVERY DAY. MAKE IT WORK Confession: I've had access to a bicycle desk and a treadmill desk—both free—for months now, and I've never so much as attempted either one. The thing is, I hate Spinning, and I hate treadmills. So what works for me? Standing as often as it makes sense for the task at hand, taking lots of walking breaks and stretching and moving several times throughout the day.

MOVE. ESPECIALLY AFTER YOU EAT

Typically, when a person eats breakfast, lunch or dinner and then sits in a desk chair or on the sofa for the next hour or two, she experiences "mountainous" spikes in blood sugar, Dr. Levine says. But if, instead, she gets up and walks around—even for just 15 minutes—she cuts those blood glucose increases in half. "That's important, because those 'mountains' are the number-one physiological predictor of type 2 diabetes," Dr. Levine explains.

MAKE IT WORK I don't exactly know why, but the mental image of ginormous blood sugar spikes, and the fact that a simple, quick stroll (which feels nice after a meal anyway) can cut down on them so dramatically, really got me on my feet. It's built in after breakfast, because I walk around then to prepare for the day; so after lunch I have to remind myself to meander. After dinner, I walk in place while I do the dishes instead of letting them sit in the sink until morning. My kitchen is tidier, and my abs are tighter.

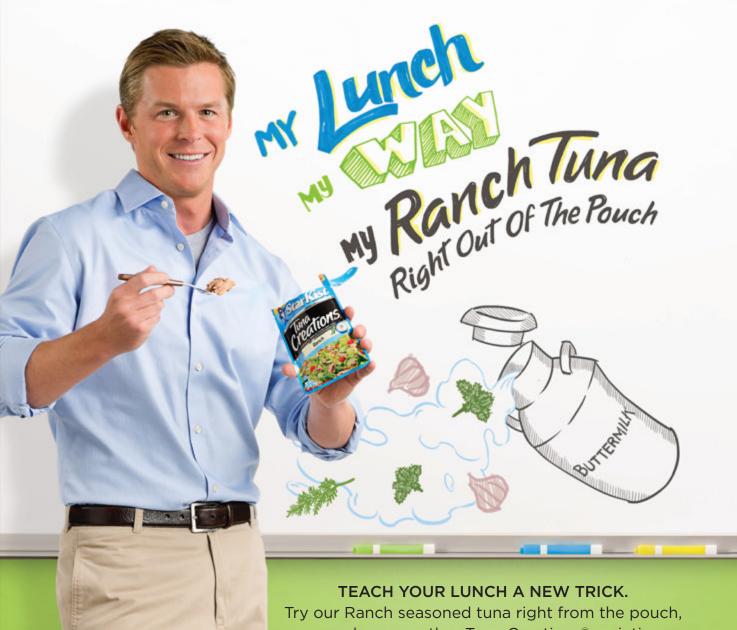
FIGHT BACK WITH EXERCISE

While there have been conflicting study results as to whether a workout can counteract all the negative health effects of sitting, it doesn't seem likely. "The reason is simple: If I eat breakfast, lunch and dinner and then go to the gym, those blood glucose mountains have already happened," Dr. Levine explains. "It's too late." Plus, single-action cardio—in which you're on a machine for a long time—keeps you in one position instead of activating new muscles and improving mobility and stability, Miller adds.

That said, exercise, especially the right kind, is incredibly good for you. Functional weight-bearing moves (think squats, kettlebell swings and dead lifts) are the best things desk jockeys can do. Don't spend your whole session sitting on a bench or an exercise ball, says Adam Bornstein, a trainer in Denver and the founder of Born Fitness. "Standing works your core no matter what you're doing and automatically engages your whole body," he says. When it comes to cardio, trade your tried-and-true treadmill for a circuit of squat jumps, burpees and jumping jacks, or swap your beloved recumbent bike for treadmill intervals. And don't forget yoga. It improves body awareness, so the poses you strike on the mat will pay off in your desk chair.

MAKE IT WORK I recently started CrossFit; the result is that functional movements like squats and dead lifts are part of my routine twice a week. I also hit a weekly yoga class, where I work on flexibility and mobility in my hips, which get stiff if I've been bad about sitting all day. Because I'm allergic to cardio, I use a Fitbit to motivate myself to move more—if I'm not getting close to my 10,000 steps, I'll get off the subway a stop early and walk the rest of the way home. I'm not sitting as much as I used to, and my body looks and feels better for it. ●





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While getting the nutrient from real food is best, protein powder is an easy, convenient and healthy way to boost your daytime intake—and, no, it's not just for bodybuilders. "It's a great option for women who are trying to lose weight or gain lean muscle," Mangieri says. Here's the scoop on what protein powder can do and which kind is right for you.

Whey

Consider it the gold standard for your postworkout needs: Whey, which makes up about 20 percent of the protein found in a glass of milk, is a complete protein, meaning that it contains all nine essential amino acids. The body absorbs whey efficiently, so it's a good option for replenishing muscles after a sweat session. "Adding 15 to 25 grams of protein to a carb-rich recovery snack or meal helps repair muscle tissue," Mangieri says. "You can do this best during the 30- to 45-minute window following a hard workout." Sip a smoothie that includes a three to one ratio of carbs to protein *before* you shower to help your muscles work at their peak the next time you go to the gym.

123 calories and 28 grams of protein per serving

Casein

Your body digests this dairybased complete protein more slowly than whey. "If you're looking to repair muscles after your workout, whey is the best choice, but casein is great, too," Mangieri says. "And because casein is absorbed steadily and can help you feel fuller longer, it's ideal to eat with your breakfast." Bonus: Casein is naturally high in glutamine, an amino acid that helps reduce muscle soreness. 137 calories and 24 grams of protein per serving

Soy

The only plant-based complete protein, soy is a good alternative for vegans. It contains soy isoflavones, which improve bone density and may fight free radicals in the body. Soy powder has a more intense flavor than other varieties and tastes best when blended with ingredients like bananas, peanut butter or cocoa powder. Soy isn't for everyone, though. Research links a high consumption of the protein with an increased risk of breast cancer among women who have a history of estrogenpositive breast cancer, says Barbara Lewin, R.D., a sports nutritionist whose clients include Olympic and professional athletes. And if you have a thyroid condition, soy can reduce the effectiveness of the gland's hormones.

120 calories and 25 grams of protein per serving

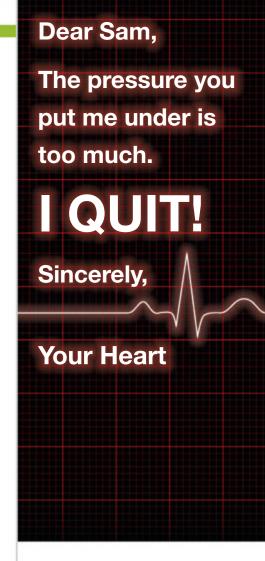
Pea

This plant-based pick can help you eat less. A study in *Nutrition Journal* found that people who

Beyond the Blender

Putting a scoop of protein powder in your smoothie is a no-brainer. "Your body needs a carb, like fruit, to transport protein quickly to your muscles and absorb it efficiently for recovery and growth following exercise," says Christine Gerbstadt, R.D., the author of *The Doctor's* Detox Diet. If you're looking to switch things up, there are plenty of other tasty ways to sneak the powders into your diet.

- Put one scoop of whey or casein into your morning oatmeal.
- Whisk two scoops of brown rice or hemp into pancake or waffle mix.
- Add two scoops of hemp to curries, soups and stews.
- Stir one scoop of pea or hemp into hummus, guacamole or black bean dip.
- Replace up to 1/4 cup of flour in a muffin or quick-bread recipe with whey or soy.



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Protein Powder Decoded

Skimming the nutrition labels of powders practically requires a dictionary. Ryan Andrews, R.D., explains what you need to know.

Choose the right type

Protein isolates are 90 to 95 percent protein and best if you want more pure protein per serving. Protein concentrates are 60 to 70 percent protein. They retain some fat, fiber and beneficial compounds of the protein source, such as omega-3s in hemp. Hydrolyzed proteins can be easier to digest because they've been pretreated with enzymes to break the large protein chains into shorter peptides.

Watch the sugar content

French vanilla and rich chocolate protein powders may sound delicious, but some may be higher in added sugar. Seek out powders with no more than five grams of sugar per scoop. Steer clear of artificial sweeteners like aspartame and xylitol, which can cause bloating, gas or other health problems. Instead, opt for formulas sweetened with stevia, or mix a little honey or maple syrup with plain powder.

Avoid additives

Common ones like creatine, a chemical that can boost athletic performance, can separate from protein in the bottle, leading you to unknowingly ingest all creatine and no protein. Using a powder with as much pure protein as possible is the only way to know exactly how many grams you're getting per scoop.

consumed 20 grams of pea protein 30 minutes before a meal ate 42 percent less food than those who had the same amount of whey protein. "The body takes longer to absorb pea protein, and that can help keep you from feeling hungry," Mangieri says. Lewin suggests that you check the label to make sure the supplement has at least 2,000 milligrams of leucine, an amino acid that enhances muscle repair and growth. Pea protein isn't a complete protein, so eat other sources throughout the day to round out your intake. 103 calories and 23 grams of protein per serving

Hemp

Derived from the nutrient-dense seeds of the hemp plant, this near-complete protein has up to nine grams of fiber per scoop; that protein-and-fiber combo helps promote satiety and weight loss. Plus, hemp contains omega-6 fatty acids, good fats that can reduce inflammation, prevent heart disease and improve brain function, Mangieri says. The downside? Hemp powders often cost more and have a lot less protein per

scoop than most others. 100 calories and 12 grams of protein per serving

Brown rice

This whole grain creates a protein powder rich in B vitamins, fiber and iron. Easy to digest, brown rice protein is a good option for anyone with stomach problems or a soy or dairy allergy (it's hypoallergenic). One caveat: The naturally occurring arsenic in rice can concentrate in the powder. Read labels and choose a brand that tests for arsenic levels, says Ryan Andrews, R.D., a nutrition coach for Precisionnutrition.com. 50 calories and 10 grams of protein per serving •

Triple Threat

Want seriously sculpted arms? After your next workout, whip up a blend of whey, casein and soy powders, which can spur muscle growth better than whey alone can, a new study in the Journal of Applied Physiology found. Your body digests each of the proteins at different rates; combining them extends the available supply of amino acids, and hence the ability to build muscle, by up to four hours, says study coauthor Dillon Walker, Ph.D., of Texas A&M University.

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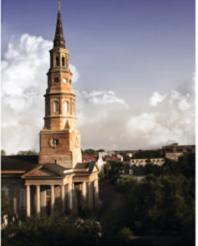


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The Flat-Belly Fix

Bacteria in your gut may be the secret to a sexy stomach. Learn the latest research on getting slim—and healthy for good.

By Laura Beil

What if you could enjoy a chocolate bar without taking in all its calories? This isn't just wishful thinking. It may already be happening, thanks to the trillions of microbes in your digestive system.

Until recently, the assumption was that the bacteria huddling in your intestine pretty much mind their own business. But now a growing body of research suggests that your internal community of bacteria, known as a microbiota, could be influencing your metabolism and, surprisingly, affecting your weight.

For example, having a greater abundance of a recently discovered type of bacteria called Christensenellaceae in your gut is associated with being slim, while having less of the bacteria is linked to being obese, a new study in the journal *Cell* shows. "How much you have is partially determined by genetics," says lead study author Julia Goodrich, a graduate student at Cornell University. The good news is that most of us harbor the bacteriait was detected in 96 percent of the study samples—and it may be possible to alter our levels to bring our weight down.

Christensenellaceae isn't the only bacteria that might affect your jeans size. A diverse mixture of microbes in the gut seems to be one key to staying slim, says Jeffrey Gordon, M.D., the director of the Center for Genome Sciences and Systems Biology at the Washington University School of Medicine, who was one of the first researchers to link intestinal bacteria and obesity. In fact, a 2013 study found that lean people have 70 percent more gut bacteria and therefore a more diverse microbiota than that of their overweight peers. And research shows that people in the United States, which has a high rate of obesity, have less-diverse gut microbes than people from less developed parts of the world do. The correlation is consistent enough that in a study of twins, "we could predict whether one was lean or obese based solely on their gut microbes," says Rob Knight, Ph.D., a cofounder of the American Gut Project.

Gut Instinct

Exactly how bacteria influence weight isn't known yet, but many researchers believe that your gut microbiota plays a role in processing food and helping to determine how

many calories and nutrients your body absorbs. Certain intestinal microbes may also alter your sensitivity to insulin—the hormone that moves sugar out of your blood—so that your body burns fat it would have otherwise stored.

Your gut bacteria might affect how hungry you are too. One key microbe appears to be *Helicobacter pylori*, the bacterium that is involved in causing ulcers and stomach cancer. Antibiotic treatments have helped cut *H. pylori* infection rates in half in recent decades, which is good

Spoon up some probiotic-rich yogurt with pomegranate seeds for a hit of fiber. It's the perfect tasty treat for your gut bacteria.

news for ulcer sufferers—but which could be bad news for our waistlines. It turns out that *H*. pylori also dials back the stomach's production of the hunger hormone ghrelin. "When you wake up in the morning and you're hungry, it's because ghrelin is telling you to eat," says Martin Blaser, M.D., a professor of medicine and microbiology at New York University and the author of the book *Missing Microbes*. "When you eat breakfast, your level of ghrelin usually goes down, but if you don't have Helicobacter in your system, it doesn't." The end result: You could eat more.

Changing Microbes

You might not even have to take antibiotics to feel their effects on your gut bacteria. The heavy reliance on antibiotics by the food industry, which routinely uses the drugs in feed to keep livestock healthy, may be fueling the rise of obesity by disrupting the fine balance of our intestinal microbes, some experts believe. "The obesity epidemic really took off in the last 20 years in the U.S. So the question is, what happened then? What was a large segment of the population exposed to that could account for this massive weight gain?" asks Lee Riley, M.D., a professor of epidemiology at the University of California, Berkeley. He points out that that's when the number of large-scale densely packed factory farms expanded, which also increased the use of antibiotics in livestock feed. Today, 80 percent of the antibiotics sold in the United States go toward helping animals remain healthy and gain more weight in crowded conditions. "Counties with the highest prevalence of obesity are those counties with large concentrated animal feeding operations," he says.

Not to mention that antibiotics are often used when they shouldn't be, as when doctors prescribe them for viral infections or because patients demand them. The exact repercussion on human health is still being debated, but Dr. Blaser says that the effect in laboratory studies is pretty clear. "If you put mice on a high-fat diet, they get fat," he says. "If you put them on antibiotics, they get fat. And if you put them on both, they get very fat."

Boost Your Bugs

While some of your gut bacteria is determined by genetics, lifestyle and dietary habits can have a dramatic impact on your mix of beneficial and harmful microbes. A study in the journal *Nature* found that when people switched from their normal diet to one consisting primarily of meat and cheese, there was an almost immediate increase in *Bilophila*, a type of bacteria that has been linked to colitis, but that a plant-based diet decreased the levels. Here are four simple steps you can take starting today to help keep your intestinal bacteria robust.

Eat more fiber. It's the number-one thing you can do, says Justin Sonnenburg, Ph.D., an assistant professor of microbiology and immunology at Stanford University. New research suggests that fiber nourishes your microbes, making them diverse and more likely to help keep you slim. Avoid the temptation to buy processed foods that have added fiber. Instead, eat vegetables, fruits and whole grains. Aim for at least two to three servings each of produce and whole grains and 20 to 30 grams of fiber a day, says Mark Moyad, M.D., a FITNESS advisory board member. These foods also provide prebiotics, which are essentially a type of fiber that your gut bacteria flourishes on. Some plants, like sunchokes, garlic and leeks, are packed with prebiotics. Bananas and wholewheat breakfast cereals are other good sources.

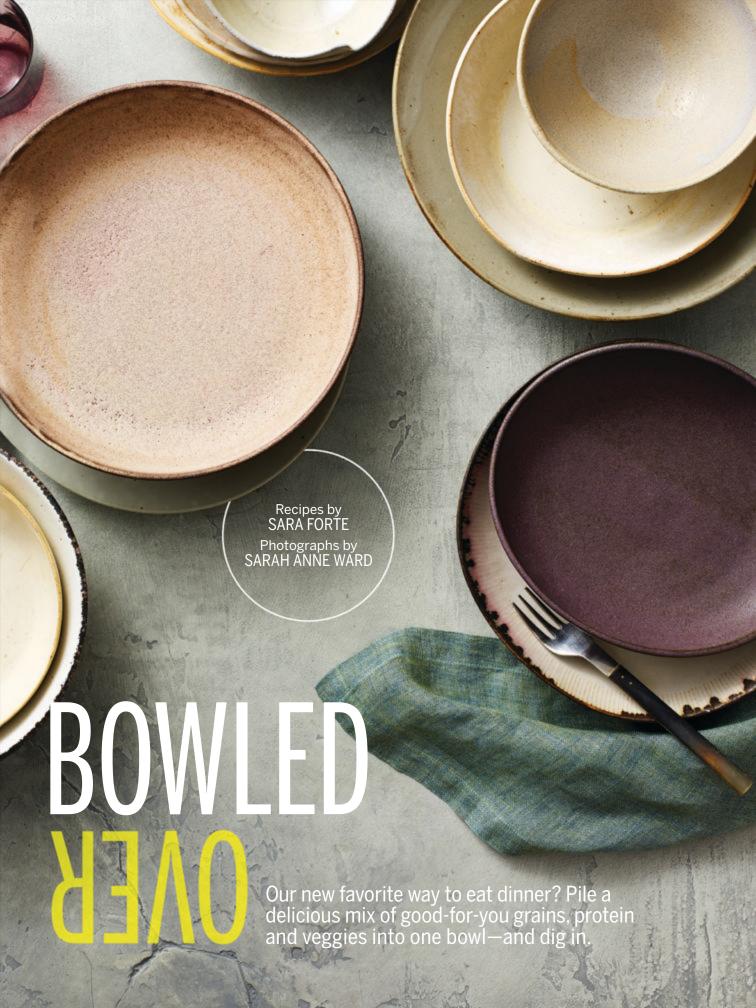
Snack smarter. The fact that we consume so much added sugar—more than 22 teaspoons a day for the average person—could actually be starving our gut flora, Sonnenburg says. Bacteria need complex carbohydrates, like legumes and whole grains, in order to thrive. So when you get too many calories from sweets, you're leaving your microbes hungry. They either die or adapt by feeding on the mucus inside your intestine, which, experts hypothesize, could contribute to low-level inflammation, a condition that has been linked to obesity. Instead of grabbing a cookie when



your stomach starts growling at 3:00 p.m., reach for a handful of nuts or an apple. Check labels for hidden sugars in foods like pasta sauce and salad dressing. And choose brown rice and whole-grain pasta instead of white.

Pick probiotic foods. If prebiotics are like fertilizer for your microbial garden, probiotics are like seeds. The best way to get them is by regularly eating fermented foods such as yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut and miso. And about yogurt, that probiotic rock star: A landmark study in the *New England Journal* of Medicine reported that among all foods studied, yogurt was the one most strongly correlated with

weight loss. The average person gained almost a pound a year, but people who regularly ate yogurt actually lost weight. Choose plain Greek yogurt and mix in pomegranate seeds or your favorite berries for a hit of fiber. Move your body. Your bacteria might benefit from a good workout as much as you do. Exercisers with a normal BMI had more diverse microbes than exercisers with a high BMI, according to a recent Irish study of male rugby players. They also had higher levels of Akkermansiaceae, a type of bacteria that has been linked to lower obesity rates. So sweat daily to trim your gut—and to boost your gut bacteria. •







SERVES: 4

Hands-on time: 30 minutes Total time: 50 minutes

- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- teaspoons olive oil
- tablespoon brown sugar
- teaspoon salt plus additional for seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 3/4 pound flank steak
- 11/2 cups skim milk
- 1 cup water
- 3/4 cup stone-ground cornmeal
- 2 bell peppers, sliced
- avocado, diced Juice of 1/2 lime
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, rinsed, drained and warmed
- 1. In a small bowl, whisk together chili powder, 2 teaspoons oil, sugar, salt and pepper. In a baking dish, coat steak with spice mixture.
- 2. To make polenta, combine milk, water and cornmeal in a large saucepan over low heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until polenta is creamy, 25 minutes. Season with salt.
- 3. Heat grill pan over medium-high heat. Toss peppers with remaining oil and cook until charred and soft, 5 minutes. Transfer to a plate and add steak to pan. Grill 5 to 7 minutes per side, or until it reaches the

then thinly slice across the grain.

- 4. In a small bowl, combine avocado and lime juice and season with salt.
- 5. Divide polenta among four bowls and top with beans, steak, peppers and avocado.

Nutrition facts per serving: 483 calories, 31 g protein, 54 g carbohydrate, 17 g fat (4 g saturated), 12 g fiber, 877 mg sodium

HONEY-GLAZED SALMON, RICE AND KALE BOWL

SERVES: 4

Hands-on time: 15 minutes Total time: 60 minutes

- 21/4 cups water
 - 1 cup brown rice, rinsed
 - 1 large bunch kale, stemmed and chopped
 - tablespoons olive oil
 - tablespoons lemon juice
- teaspoon salt plus additional for seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper plus additional for seasoning
- 2 small beets, grated
- 1/4 cup golden raisins
- 1/4 cup goat cheese, crumbled
- 4 3-ounce skinless salmon fillets
- 1 tablespoon whole-grain mustard
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1/2 cup white wine

- 1. Preheat the oven to 350°. In a medium saucepan, bring water and rice to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until tender, 40 minutes.
- 2. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine kale, oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper and, using your hands, massage kale to coat. Add beets, golden raisins and goat cheese.
- 3. In a baking dish, season salmon with salt and pepper. Brush mustard and honey on salmon and pour wine over the fillets. Bake until the fillet centers are just cooked, 10 to 14 minutes.
- 4. Divide rice among four bowls and top with kale salad and salmon.

Nutrition facts per serving: 498 calories, 27 g protein, 58 g carbohydrate, 16 g fat (3.6 g saturated), 6 g fiber, 317 mg sodium



ROASTED SWEET POTATO, QUINOA AND FRIED EGG BOWL

SERVES: 4

Hands-on time: 15 minutes **Total time:** 35 minutes

- 2 small sweet potatoes (1 pound), diced
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil, melted
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 11/₃ cups water
- 3/4 cup quinoa
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1 small shallot

- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 4 eggs
- ¹/₄ cup walnuts, toasted and chopped Microgreens, for garnish
- 1. Preheat the oven to 425°. On a baking sheet, toss sweet potatoes with 1 tablespoon coconut oil and paprika and season with ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Roast until tender, 25 minutes.
- 2. Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan, bring water and quinoa to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until liquid is absorbed, 15 minutes. Fluff quinoa with a fork, then transfer to a large bowl; add sweet potatoes and combine.
- 3. To make vinaigrette, puree olive oil, vinegar, shallot, mustard, thyme and remaining salt and pepper in a blender until smooth. Pour half over quinoa—sweet potato mixture, tossing to coat.
- **4.** In a large nonstick skillet, heat remaining coconut oil over medium heat. Add eggs and fry until whites are set but yolks are still soft, 3 minutes.
- **5.** Divide quinoa–sweet potato mixture among four bowls and top with an egg, walnuts and microgreens. Drizzle with remaining vinaigrette.

Nutrition facts per serving: 490 calories, 14 g protein, 46 g carbohydrate, 29 g fat (9.6 g saturated), 7 g fiber, 459 mg sodium

FARRO AND LENTIL BOWL WITH ARUGULA PESTO

SERVES: 4

Hands-on time: 10 minutes Total time: 40 minutes

- 3 cups water
- cup semi-pearled farro, rinsed
- tablespoons white wine 2 vinegar
- teaspoon salt plus additional for seasoning
- teaspoon black pepper plus additional for seasoning
- cups arugula
- 1/2 cup shaved Parmesan
- cup pine nuts, toasted
- tablespoons lemon juice
- garlic clove
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 3 cups cooked lentils
- pound cherry tomatoes,

1. In a medium saucepan, bring water and farro to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until tender, 30 minutes. Drain, return to pan and toss with vinegar. Season with salt and pepper.

2. Meanwhile, make the pesto: In a food processor fitted with a metal blade, pulse 3 cups arugula, 1/4 cup Parmesan, pine nuts, lemon juice, garlic, salt and pepper until combined. With the motor running, slowly add oil and blend until smooth.

3. Divide farro among four bowls and top with lentils, tomatoes, remaining arugula and Parmesan. Dollop with half the pesto. (Storeleftover pesto in a glass jar in the refrigerator for up to one week.)

Nutrition facts per serving:

491 calories, 25 g protein, 69 g carbohydrate, 13 g fat (2.6 g saturated), 17 g fiber, 286 mg sodium

CHICKEN, CAULIFLOWER MASH AND SPINACH BOWL SERVES: 4

Hands-on time: 15 minutes Total time: 15 minutes

- 1 small head cauliflower (1 pound), cut into florets
- 1/3 cup 2 percent milk
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- garlic cloves (1 whole and 2 minced)
- 2 tablespoons parsley leaves
- 1 tablespoon rosemary
- 1/2 teaspoon salt plus additional for seasoning
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 10 ounces baby spinach Lemon wedge
- 21/2 cups diced rotisserie chicken, warmed
- 1/4 cup pomegranate seeds

1. Steam cauliflower until tender, 6 minutes. Transfer to a food processor fitted with a metal blade. Add milk, 2 tablespoons oil, whole garlic clove, parsley, rosemary, salt and pepper and pulse until smooth.

2. In a large skillet, heat remaining oil over medium heat. Add minced garlic and cook 1 minute. Add spinach, season with salt and cook until just wilted. 2 minutes.



Ace Your Basi

A bowl doesn't have to start with a grain. Try a steamed vegetablecauliflower, butternut squash or carrots-pureed with herbs.

SRIRACHA-LIME SHRIMP AND **SOBA NOODLE BOWL**

SERVES: 4

Hands-on time: 20 minutes Total time: 30 minutes

- 4 tablespoons toasted sesame oil Juice of 1 lime
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons sriracha
- 1 small head broccoli (1 pound), cut into florets
- 8 ounces soba noodles
- 1 cup shredded purple cabbage
- scallions, thinly sliced, plus additional for garnish
- 1 pound jumbo shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 3 garlic cloves, minced Salt
 - Black pepper

Sesame seeds, toasted (optional)

1. In a small bowl, whisk together 3 tablespoons oil, lime juice, vinegar, honey, soy sauce and sriracha.

2. In a large saucepan of salted boiling water, cook broccoli until tender, 2 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a colander; drain and chop. Add noodles to water and cook until al dente, 8 minutes; drain. Return noodles to pot and toss with broccoli, cabbage, scallions and half the sauce.

3. Heat the broiler. In a large bowl, toss shrimp with garlic and remaining oil. Season with salt and pepper. Thread shrimp onto four skewers and broil until just pink, 2 to 3 minutes.

4. Divide noodles among four bowls and top each with a shrimp skewer. Sprinkle with scallions and sesame seeds, if using, and drizzle with remaining sauce.

Nutrition facts per serving: 497 calories, 33 g protein, 60 g carbohydrate, 16 g fat (2.1 g saturated), 7 g fiber, 491 mg sodium



Build Your Own Bowl

It's simple: Just follow these four steps, mixing and matching the components. Make it even easier by prepping big batches of grains, proteins and vegetables at the start of the week and storing them in the fridge.

PICK A BASE



3/4 cup cooked quinoa, brown rice, farro, bulgur, polenta or barley or 4 ounces soba or whole-wheat noodles

POWER IT WITH PROTEIN



3 ounces chicken, ground beef, turkey or seafood (salmon, cod, halibut, shrimp); 1 egg (fried, hard-boiled, poached); 3/4 cup beans or lentils; or 1/2 cup tofu

FILL IT OUT WITH



Aim for at least 1 cup. Raw: greens, avocado, tomato, cucumber or radish. Roasted: brussels sprouts. beets, carrots or broccoli. Sautéed: Swiss chard, onion, bell pepper or mushrooms.

FLAVOR IT WITH TOPPINGS



Fresh herbs, 1 tablespoon cheese, a sprinkling of toasted nuts or seeds, a few olives or a dollop of pesto, plain yogurt, tahini or hot sauce





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